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REPORT

OF

DR. STEPHEN COLLINS,

ON

PUBLIC EDUCATION;

PRESENTED BY HIM, TO

THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,

AS CHAIRMAN OF THE

JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.



BALTIMORE:

PRINTED BY JAMES LUCAS.

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From J. H. Smith 1846



Baltimore City Council. Joint
Committee on Education
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REPORT.

The joint committee on education, to whom was referred so much of the message of the Mayor, as relates to the Public Schools, submit the following

REPORT.

Your committee cannot refrain from an expression of their high gratification at the prominence given, in the Mayor's annual message, to the education of the young; and they most cordially unite with him in the opinion that, "there is no kind of expense which the people of our city will contribute to defray with more alacrity, than that for the support of Public Schools." The education of the young, in institutions supported at the public charge, is, in many portions of Europe, and in this country, one of the most remarkable features of the age in which it is our happiness to live. It is a patriotic policy; because, while education awakens the faculties of youth, and thus preserves the mind from starvation, and the heart from impoverishment, it also enlightens manhood in all that appertains to civil and religious liberty; and thus qualifies the citizen to comprehend and to maintain the principles on which our institutions are based. It is an economical policy; because the diffusion of knowledge tends to diminish the perpetration of crime; and the cost attending on the conviction and punishment of the offender against civil and social laws, would be more benevolently expended in teaching him the true nature of moral obligation. The welfare of society may require a sacrifice to the sternness of her statutes; but humanity will endeavor to save the citizen from the commission of crime. It is a benevolent policy; because education teaches man his accountability and his destiny; and thus conducts him to the knowledge of the Great Spirit from whom he came, and to whom he tends. Society, like a loving mother, should open her arms to receive the destitute wanderer and the homeless orphan to her warm and ample bosom; and may reasonably expect that the virtue and usefulness of manhood will more than repay her maternal care. The unenlightened mind of man gives utterance to sounds as mournful as those of the Egyptian statue when surrounded by the darkness

of night ; but when the genial influence of education is imparted, the sound is as harmonious as that of the same statue when it received the rays of the rising sun. It is delightful to contemplate that public education imparted to poverty and orphanage, may give developement to genius of the highest order, which, without this fostering care, might have gone down to the grave, shrouded in Egyptian darkness—"darkness visible"—"darkness that might be felt." The rude block of marble lies undistinguished in the quarry, until the chisel of the sculptor gives it the graceful proportions which attract the admiration of the world.

The noble example afforded by some of the States of the Union, deserves imitation as far as prudence will allow. Massachusetts appropriated, during the last year, \$596,000 for the support of Schools; New York about one million for 700,000 children actually taught in the district Schools ; Pennsylvania \$470,000 for 208,402 scholars ; and the Controllers of Philadelphia city and county expended \$220,000 for the education of 33,300 scholars. Ohio has six thousand Public School Districts, and 696,000 youth entitled to the benefit of these schools. Your committee are confident that the public spirit of the citizens of Baltimore will induce them to imitate, with a due regard to prudential considerations, such bright examples, which give a fair promise for the prosperity of our country, and the perpetuity of our institutions,—civil and political.

Your committee have indulged in these general observations, in order that they might be enabled to define their own position. They are, in the largest sense, the friends of public education. But they cannot close their eyes from the influence of those prudential motives which control the action of all reflecting men. They are aware of the pecuniary burdens under which Baltimore has been placed by the indulgence of patriotic considerations ; and they proudly rejoice at the self-sacrificing spirit with which she has sustained her fair and unspotted name. The city authorities should be cautious in imposing, even for benevolent objects, additional burdens on the tax-payer. But, in addition to this, your committee believe that the prosperity of the public school system in Baltimore, is essentially connected with its *gradual developement*. The wisdom derived from the experience of passing years, will give the ability to lay the foundations strong and secure ; a rapid and expansive erection would endanger its stability. A vigilant, economical and successful administration of the public school system will maintain and increase its popularity ; and the City Council should carefully guard against the adoption of measures which might divert this favorable current into hostility. Your committee adopt the words of Bacon which, profound in their wisdom, can never become trite : "Our changes, to be beneficial, should resemble those of time, which, though the greatest of all innovators, works out its alterations so gradually that the pro-

cess is never perceived." The truth of this analogical illustration is confirmed by observation of material and intellectual development. The acorn, by degrees, is matured into the oak; and years pass away before its roots have extended so far as to enable it to defy the power of elemental strife. The philosopher, whose mind extends over "the range of planets, suns, and adamantine spheres," was once cradled in the mental imbecility of childhood. It was, step by step, that he attained the knowledge which makes him, "How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in apprehension, how like a god!" Centuries passed away before the nomadic tribes of primeval man were merged in the institutions of civilized life. Christianity herself, notwithstanding the divinity of her origin, had her broad foundations laid immoveably secure, in suffering and toil, in persecution and fire, in blood and death. It is a great law of material and intellectual nature, that premature or rapid development, is followed by premature or rapid decay.

Having indulged in these remarks as explanatory of their views in relation to the general policy of the public school system, your committee proceed to the consideration of the provision for the support of the Public Schools during the current year. In their estimate of expenditures and resources for eighteen hundred and forty-five, the School Commissioners report the expenditures as \$45,043 94; including \$5,825 as note and interest to be paid during the year on the purchase money for the High School building. To meet this expenditure, the City Register, in his last annual report, makes a statement which shews that the estimated resources of the Board of School Commissioners, together with the moneys belonging to the School fund which will be received by him during the year, amount to \$35,715 78. If this be deducted from the estimated expenditure, it will leave \$9,328 16, as the amount to be appropriated by the City Council for the ordinary expenses of this year; which sum also includes \$5,825, due the Messrs. Cohen as an instalment payable in 1845. Having thus, by a comparison of the estimates of the School Commissioners with those of the Register, arrived at the amount required, your committee most cordially recommend that the City Council appropriate this sum, as corrected in a subsequent part of this report, for the Public Schools.

Your committee do not assent to that part of the report of the Commissioners in which they recommend the continuance of the levy of five cents on every hundred dollars. It is the duty of the Commissioners to inform the City Council what sum will be required for the support of the schools; and it is the duty of the Council to provide for the payment of that sum. But the *mode* by which that amount shall be raised is to be determined by the Council. The propriety of this course will be easily proved. By a comparison of the reports of Commissioners and Register, it has been shown that

the amount required is \$9,328 16. A levy of five cents on the hundred dollars, taking the assessed value of property in the city, liable to taxes for city purposes, at \$57,500,000, will amount to \$28,750. Your committee are informed by the Register that *sevenths* of a levy will be collected by the close of the year. *Sevenths* of \$28,750 is \$20,125. Hence it will appear that a levy of five cents on every hundred dollars, would produce, *during the year*, twice the requisite amount. The report of the Commissioners was drawn up before the publication of that of the Register; and the report of the Register shows that the estimated receipts, during the year, from arrears of school tax, from city's proportion of school fund from the State, and from balance in hand, amount to \$22,573 06. How then was it possible for the School Commissioners to know what specific levy would be required, when they were uninformed as to what amount, apart from a new levy, would be in the city treasury, for their use, during the year? In the report submitted on January 1st, 1844, the Commissioners, for the first time, recommended a specific levy. Your committee respectfully suggest that the mode which prevailed before that period is the most appropriate. Whenever the Council authorises the erection of new school houses, the ordinance which confers the power can supply the means. The fourth section of ordinance No. 7, approved March 11th, 1844, provides that the School Commissioners shall not build or purchase property without the approval of the Mayor and City Council. Why, then, should a levy be laid which will produce twice the requisite amount?

One of the items in the estimate of resources, made by the School Commissioners, is \$800 for rent of the Assembly Rooms. But as the city commissioners have given a unanimous opinion that the continued use of the saloon for balls would endanger the safety of the building, and the School Commissioners having decided that it shall no longer be used for such purposes, or be rented for any uses except for concerts and lectures, which will not endanger the building, nor, being held at night, interfere with the order of the schools, a diminution of that item of resource will be the consequence. In addition to this, they have very properly determined to occupy the Library room for the accommodation of male school No. 9, by which arrangement they will be enabled to remove the smaller scholars from the dark, low and unhealthy room in the basement of the building. In consequence of these arrangements, your committee have added \$400 to the estimate of expenditures, made by the board of commissioners.

The Male High School has long been in want of the apparatus necessary for teaching Chemistry, Astronomy and Natural Philosophy. Your committee therefore recommend an appropriation of \$500, or such portion of that amount as may be required, for the purchase, under the direction of the School Commissioners, of this apparatus.

Provision was made, in the levy of eighteen hundred and forty-four, for the payment of the note and interest due to the Messrs. Cohen in eighteen hundred and forty-five; but, as the estimated receipts from arrears of school tax, during the present year, amounting to \$12,565 35, include this sum, the note and interest are embraced in the expenditures for eighteen hundred and forty-five.

The whole account, as corrected, is stated as follows, to wit :

School Commissioners estimate of expenditures for 1845,	\$45,043 94
School Commissioners estimate of resources,	\$13,142 72
Register's estimate of resources,	22,573 06
	35,715 78
	\$9,328 16
Add deficit of rent of Assembly Rooms,	400 00
Add Apparatus for Male High School,	500 00
	\$10,228 16

Thus it will appear that \$10,228 16 is the sum required for the ordinary expenses of the Public Schools for the year eighteen hundred and forty-five. A levy of four cents on every hundred dollars, which is the amount agreed on in a conference between your committee and the School Commissioners, will produce \$23,000. Seventenths of this amount is \$16,100, which will be collected during the year; and, as this sum exceeds the estimated demand on the school tax, a balance will be in the city treasury at the end of the year.

Your committee recommend the adoption of the subjoined resolutions :

STEPHEN COLLINS, *Chairman.*

Resolved by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, That, for the payment of the ordinary expenses of the Public Schools for the year 1845, a tax of four cents on every hundred dollars of assessable property in the city of Baltimore, and in like proportion for any greater or less amount, be, and the same hereby is, levied for the year eighteen hundred and forty-five.

SECTION 2. *And be it further resolved, That the sum of five hundred dollars, or such portion of that amount as may be required, be, and the same hereby is, appropriated for the purchase, under the direction and control of the School Commissioners, of apparatus required for teaching Chemistry, Astronomy, and Natural Philosophy in the Male Public High School; said sum, or such portion as may be required, to be paid out of the school tax for eighteen hundred and forty-five.*



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